

Message Text

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION USUN

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 11119

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET DISSENT: THE END OF A GENERATION?

1. SUMMARY. THE IMMINENT DEPARTURE FROM THE USSR OF ANDREY
AMALRIK PERHAPS SYMPOLIZES THE END OF SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES BY A
GENERATION OF DISSIDENTS WHICH CAME TO PROMINENCE IN THE LATE
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1960S AND HAS BEEN UNDER INCREASINGLY HEAVY ATTACK SINCE 1971.

THESE DISSIDENTS HAVE BEEN MOSTLY URBAN INTELLECTUALS WITH A "WESTERN" CAST OF MIND. SHOULD THE SOVIETS SUCCEED FINALLY IN SILENCING THIS GROUP, AS NOW SEEMS LIKELY, THEY WILL STILL BE FACED WITH OTHER KINDS OF DISSIDENCE; BUT THEY CAN CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON ELIMINATING A GROUP WHOSE VIEWS AND ACTIVITIES EVOKED A GREAT DEAL OF WESTERN SYMPATHY AND EMBARRASSED THE AUTHORITIES. OUR SOURCES BELIEVE THAT NEW DISSIDENTS WILL EMERGE, BUT THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT THE NEW GENERATION WILL LACK THE INTELLECTUAL BREADTH OF VISION POSSESSED BY MEN LIKE SAKHAROV AND AMALRIK, AND THEREFORE WILL BE RELATIVELY LESS ATTRACTIVE TO THE WEST. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT PRECISELY BECAUSE THE NEXT GENERATION OF DISSIDENTS MAY PROVE LESS "WESTERN" IN OUTLOOK, THEY MAY ALSO BE CORRESPONDINGLY LESS VULNERABLE TO REGIME CHARGES OF BEING "ALIEN" TO SOVIET SOCIETY. IN ANY EVENT, NEW DISSIDENTS WILL SURELY EMERGE SO LONG AS THE CPSU CONTINUES TO SUPPRESS INTELLECTUAL, CREATIVE, RELIGIOUS AND NATIONALISTIC ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE. MEANWHILE, THE REGIME SEEMS CONTENT WITH ITS PRESENT POLICY OF SELECTIVE ARRESTS, EXPULSIONS, AND INTERMITTENT HARASSMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESENT DISARRAY: THE PRIMARILY MOSCOW-BASED INTELLECTUAL DISSIDENT MOVEMENT HAS HAD A VERY BAD YEAR. THE ONLY POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT WAS THE NOBEL PRIZE WHICH SAKHAROV RECEIVED LAST SEPTEMBER. WHILE THE DISSIDENT COMMUNITY WAS PLEASED WITH THE WESTERN RECOGNITION OF THE WORK OF ITS MOST PROMINENT MEMBER, IT WAS SEEN BY THEM AS AN ISOLATED EVENT WHICH DID NOTHING TO COUNTER THE CONTINUED REPRESSION BY THE AUTHORITIES. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, THERE WAS THE SENTENCING TO PRISON OR EXILE OF KOVALEV, DJEMILEV AND TVERDOKHLEBOV. PLYUSHCH WAS EXPELLED FROM THE USSR AGAINST HIS WILL, AND NEIZVESTNIY AND RUBIN HAVE BOTH LEFT. ANDREY AMALRIK, ANOTHER PARTICULARLY PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE GROUP, IS TO LEAVE MOMENTARILY. HIS DEPARTURE IN EFFECT IS ANOTHER SYMBOL OF THE SUCCESS OF THE REPRESSIVE POLICY OF THE AUTHORITIES, SINCE HE HAS UNTIL RECENTLY RESISTED THE PRESSURES EITHER

TO KNUCKLE UNDER OR TO LEAVE.

3. OF THOSE DISSIDENTS WHO REMAIN IN THE USSR AND ARE STILL FREE, GENERAL GRIGORENKO IS SERIOUSLY ILL AND HAS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED HIS ACTIVITIES AS A RESULT. TURCHIN AND ALBREKHT OF THE AMNESTY

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INTERNATIONAL CHAPTER ARE RESIGNED TO EVENTUAL ARREST AND TRIAL. ROY MEDVEDEV HAS APPARENTLY CHOSEN TO REMAIN QUIET, PERHAPS IN HOPES THAT THE SITUATION WILL IMPROVE; BUT HE IN ANY CASE IS AN ESPOUSER OF "TRUE LENINISM" AND, AS SUCH, HAS MARXIST INTELLECTUAL ROOTS WHICH DIFFER FROM THOSE OF THE "WESTERNIZERS".

4. WHILE YURIY ORLOV'S CSCE MONITORING GROUP HAS RECENTLY BECOME PROMINENT, ITS ACTIVITIES PRESENT THE SOVIET UNION WITH A DILEMMA

SINCE THEY ARE ARE AT LEAST TO SOME DEGREE CONDUCTED UNDER THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT UMBRELLA. HOWEVER, ORLOV HAS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE REAL EFFECT OF THE EXISTENCE OF HIS COMMITTEE ON AMELIORATING THE LOSS OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS, ALTHOUGH HE DOES FEEL THAT THE GROUP WILL BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN EXISTENCE FOR SOME TIME. SAKHAROV, WHOSE PERSONAL FREEDOM IS PROBABLY SAFE, HAS UNTIL RECENTLY MAINTAINED HIS ACTIVITY AGAINST ALL THE ODDS; WE ARE TOLD, THOUGH, THAT HE HAS BECOME DEPRESSED THANKS TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES AND HAS DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE BATTLE AT LEAST FOR THE SUMMER. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, HE IS BECOMING RESIGNED TO EVENTUAL EXPULSION FROM THE USSR. (IN ANY CASE, THERE ARE DISSIDENTS WHO TAKE THE POSITION THAT THE AWARD OF THE PEACE PRIZE TO SAKHAROV WAS NOT TOTALLY BENEFICIAL TO THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT. THESE PEOPLE FEEL THAT THE AWARD CAUSED THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES TO REDOUBLE THEIR ACTIVITY OUT OF FEAR THAT THE AWARD WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE DISSIDENCE.)

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5. GLOOMY PERSPECTIVE: MOST OF THE DISSIDENTS WHO ARE STILL ACTIVE OR WITH WHOM WE HAD CONTACT PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURES OR ARRESTS, FEEL THAT THE FUTURE LOOKS BLEAK. THEY HAVE DOUBTS THAT THEY WILL BE FOLLOWED BY NEW, YOUNGER DISSIDENTS WHO SHARE THEIR VIEWS. IN PARTICULAR, THEY FEEL THEY HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO HAVE ENJOYED AN INTELLECTUAL, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THAT IS SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION. WHILE
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ALL THE DISSIDENTS WERE BROUGHT UP UNDER COMMUNISM, THEIR OWN PARENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS RECEIVED A BROAD HUMANISTIC EDUCATION IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA. THIS, THEY BELIEVE, HAS GIVEN THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT AN INTELLECTUAL BREADTH OF VISION THAT YOUNGER SOVIETS SIMPLY CANNOT COMPREHEND.

7. A SPECIAL ASPECT OF THE RELATIVE ISOLATION OF THE YOUNG POTENTIAL DISSIDENT IS THAT RECENT JEWISH EMIGRATION HAS INCLUDED A GOOD MANY ACADEMICS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS. JEWS OUR SOURCE NOTE, ARE AMONG THE FEW REMAINING GROUPS IN THE USSR WITH EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH THE WEST AND WITH A PROFOUND REVERENCE FOR EDUCATION AND WESTERN CULTURE. SOME DISSIDENTS COMMENT THAT THE RECENT JEWISH EMIGRATION HAS NOT ONLY CAUSED A DECLINE IN THE QUALITY OF SOVIET EDUCATION, BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, HAS CUT STUDENTS OFF FROM THE SORT OF BROAD GENERAL OUTLOOK WHICH JEWISH PROFESSORS TRIED TO IMPART.

8. NEW RECRUITS: OUR SOURCES SEEM TO FEEL THAT THE REMOVAL FROM THE SCENE OF MANY OF THEIR NUMBER AND THE LOWERING OF THE GENERAL CULTURAL LEVEL HAS HAD AN EFFECT. THEY NOTE BOTH THE ABSOLUTE DIMINUTION IN THE NUMBER OF YOUNG RECRUITS TO THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT AND THE FACT THAT MANY OF THOSE THAT DO JOIN IT TEND TO BE PEOPLE IN MIDDLE AGE, MANY OF WHOM REALIZE THAT THEY HAVE COME AS FAR IN THEIR PROFESSION AS IS LIKELY, AND THUS FEEL THAT THEY HAVE LITTLE OF REAL IMPORTANCE TO LOSE. OUR SOURCES ARE ALSO CONCERNED AT THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE NEW RECRUITS, LACKING THE INTELLECTUAL BAGGAGE THAT FACILITATES COMMUNICATION WITH THE WEST, WILL MAKE THE MOVEMENT--OR WHAT REMAINS OF IT--LESS EFFECTIVE IN MOBILIZING WESTERN GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC OPINION THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH THE GROUP WHOSE ACTIVITIES APPEAR TO BE COMING TO AN END.

9. THE WESTERN ANGLE: MANY OF THE "1970'S" DISSIDENTS STILL ACTIVE FEEL THAT THE WEST IS IN EFFECT AIDING AND ABETTING THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT HERE. THEY FEEL THAT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CSCE FINAL ACT HAS CAUSED THE WEST TO LOWER ITS GUARD AND THAT THE WEST INTERPRETS THE DETENTE POLICY AS MEANING THAT IT SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE PROBLEMS THAT SOVIET DISSIDENTS MAY FACE. THEY FEEL THAT WESTERN MEDIA ARE NO LONGER INTERESTED IN THEIR ACTIVITIES. FOR THE MOSCOW-BASED DISSIDENTS THIS IS AN
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ADDITIONAL CAUSE FOR CURRENT DEPRESSION.

10. THE OFFICIAL VIEW: TO JUDGE BY BREZHNEV'S PARTY CONGRESS SPEECH AND ANDROPOV'S SPEECH ON LENIN'S BIRTHDAY, THE AUTHORITIES APPEAR NOT UNDULY CONCERNED OVER THE CURRENT LEVEL OF DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES. LIKE THE DISSIDENT, THEY PROBABLY FEEL THAT WESTERN INTEREST IN DISSIDENCE IS WANING AND THAT THE STREAM OF ARRESTS, EXPULSIONS AND VOLUNTARY EMIGRATIONS IS SAPPING THE STRENGTH OF THE MOVEMENT.

11. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PRESSURE ON DISSIDENTS (OF WHICH AMALRIKIS THE LATEST EXAMPLE), THE OFFICIAL CALLS FOR VIGILANCE, THE ATTACKS IN "LITERATURNAYA GAZETA" ON THREE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS KNOWN FOR THEIR CLOSE TIES WITH DISSIDENTS, THE ALEKSANDROV ARTICLE IN PRAVDA (MOSCOW 2728) AND THE KHRENNIKOV CPSU CONGRESS SPEECH (MOSCOW 3161) ARE ALL INDICATIVE OF CONTINUING SOVIET CONCERN. BUT, ON BALANCE, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES ARE ALMOST SURELY PLEASED WITH THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IS WEAKENED AND HAS LARGELY BEEN REMOVED FROM THE FRONT PAGES OF WESTERN NEWSPAPERS.

12. WHATEVER VIEWS THE AUTHORITIES TAKE, THE DISSIDENTS THEMSELVES SEE THEIR MOVEMENT AS IN A STATE OF DISARRAY. WORSE, THEY SEE NO CURRENT SIGNS OF CHANGE IN CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL POLICY BY THE AUTHORITIES, OR IN WESTERN INTEREST, THAT MIGHT GIVE THE MOVEMENT NEW LIFE. HOWEVER, THEY ALSO FEEL THAT DISSIDENCE WILL GO ON, BUT WILL TAKE NEW AND DIFFERENT FORMS--FOR EXAMPLE, ATTEMPTS TO DISSENT WHILE REMAINING ESSENTIALLY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF MARXISM-LENINISM, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY ROY MEDVEDEV. THESE FORMS, THEY FEEL, MAY BE LESS ATTRACTIVE TO THE WEST (AND TO THEM) BUT THEY MAY ALSO ULTIMATELY PRESENT GREATER DIFFICULTIES TO THE AUTHORITIES THAN HAS THE PRESENT GROUP, WHICH, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF ITS "WESTERN" ORIENTATION, HAS BEEN RELATIVELY FAR FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF SOVIET SOCIETY AND THEREFORE VULNERABLE TO THE CHARGE OF BEING "ALIEN" TO THAT SOCIETY.

13. IN ANY CASE, IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT AS LONG AS THE KREMLIN ATTEMPTS, INTER ALIA, TO CHANNEL CREATIVE THOUGHT ALONG RIGID IDEOLOGICAL LINES, TO PERPETUATE THE WIDE GAP BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL

IMAGE OF SOVIET SOCIETY AND THE FREQUENTLY HARSH REALITIES OF
SOVIET LIFE, AND IN PARTICULAR TO REPRESS INDIVIDUAL HUMAN
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RIGHTS WHILE INSISTING THAT FREEDOM FLOURISHES, THINKING SOVIETS
OF ALL AGES WILL CONTINUE TO REALIZE THAT THE PAST AND PRESENT
CLAIMS OF THE CPSU ARE INTOLERABLY HOLLOW. THUS NEW GENERATIONS
OF DISSIDENTS, OVERT AND COVERT, WILL CONTINUE TO BE SPAWNED.
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